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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 215th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 17 May 1995, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

2. The CHAIRMAN said it was his understanding that the Committee wished to elect the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations to serve as Vice-Chairman.

3. It was so decided.

THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE CONFISCATION OF LAND AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLEMENTS IN JERUSALEM

4. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Security Council had been meeting to discuss recent developments in the occupied Arab territories and that the representative of Afghanistan, in his capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee, had taken part in the discussions and had conveyed the position of the Committee to the Security Council.

5. Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan), reporting on the discussions in the Council, said that all who had spoken had expressed concern at the recent developments in East Jerusalem, and that many delegations had agreed that the Security Council should take action.

6. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) noted that the draft resolution which had been introduced the previous day in the Security Council by the six Council members which were also members of the Non-Aligned Movement seemed likely to enjoy the support of all members of the Council except the United States of America. It would be most regrettable if the latter were to veto it, for it would be very damaging for the peace process in the Middle East and for the international situation as a whole.

7. Mr. TUFAKJI (Arab Studies Society) gave a slide presentation on the measures Israel had taken since 1967, under various "master plans", to expand its occupation of East Jerusalem and to pursue its aim of reducing the proportion of Arabs in the area, currently 28 per cent, to no more than 22 per cent. Those measures included enlarging the land area of East Jerusalem from 6.5 square kilometres to 70.5 square kilometres; confiscating unpopulated ("green") areas for "public purposes" and subsequently building settlements on them; confiscating Arab land under the Absentee Property Law; enacting regulations under which buildings in most Arab areas could have no more than three storeys; and surrounding and dividing Arab neighbourhoods by sandwiching them between Israeli settlements in order to control their expansion. As a result of that process, 33 per cent of East Jerusalem was currently occupied by Israelis, while 40 per cent consisted of Israeli-held "green" areas and 10 per cent was inhabited by Arabs. Of the remainder, only 4 per cent was available for the future expansion of Arab neighbourhoods.

8. Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan) asked for information on how archaeological excavations were affecting holy sites in the area, especially the Haram al-Sharif.

9. Mr. TUFAKJI (Arab Studies Society) said that the excavations had already weakened the buildings' foundations and that they would destroy the site if they were not stopped; however, efforts to halt them had failed.

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10. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the provisional programmes contained in working papers Nos. 4 and 5 respectively, and noted that further consultations would be held on prospective panellists for the International NGO Meeting/ European NGO Symposium. He would take it that the Committee approved working papers Nos. 4 and 5.

11. It was so decided.

UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON PALESTINIAN ADMINISTRATIVE, MANAGERIAL AND FINANCIAL NEEDS AND CHALLENGES, UNESCO HEADQUARTERS, PARIS, 28-30 JUNE 1995

12. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the provisional programme contained in working paper No. 6 and said he would take it that the Committee wished to approve it.

13. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

14. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that a draft resolution (A/AC.240/1995/L.5) regarding the organization of the list of speakers for the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly had recently been introduced in the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. Unfortunately, it went against everything that had been discussed and adopted regarding the participation of Palestine in the Special Commemorative Meeting. The matter had been raised with the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, and he hoped that the situation could be redressed.

15. In that connection he called upon all members of the Committee to support the position adopted at a recent Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, which called for the full participation of Palestine in the Commemorative Meeting, noting that it would not imply any change in the status of Palestine within the United Nations system.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.